



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors  
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: Water Agency  
Department No.: 054  
For Agenda Of: 10/14/08  
Placement: Administrative  
Estimated Tme: N/A  
Continued Item: No  
If Yes, date from:  
Vote Required: Majority

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**TO:** Board of Directors, Water Agency

**FROM:** Department Scott McGolpin, Public Works Director, 568-3010  
Director(s)  
Contact Info: Thomas D. Fayram, Deputy Public Works Director, 568-3436

**SUBJECT:** Cloud Seeding Program 2008-09

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**County Counsel Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

**Auditor-Controller Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

**Other Concurrence:** Risk Management

As to form: Yes

**Recommended Actions:**

- a) Concur with the attached Planning and Development Department's finding that CEQA Section 15164 is applicable to 00-ND-29 and that this document is adequate to meet the requirements of CEQA for the Santa Barbara County-Twitchell Reservoir Cloud Seeding Program; and
- b) Approve the 2008-2009 cloud seeding program and authorize the Chair to execute the agreement with North American Weather Consultants, Inc. (not a local vendor) for cloud seeding for the period of October 14, 2008 through June 30, 2009 unless earlier terminated, in an amount not to exceed \$128,700.

**Summary Text:**

The attached agreement with North American Weather Consultants, Inc. (NAWC) provides for a ground-based cloud seeding program, similar to programs conducted during the last 24 years (excluding 1985-1986 due to the Wheeler Fire and last year due to the Zaca Fire). The program was bid as a "professional services contract" in 2007 with an option to re-hire the contractor without re-bidding for three years. NAWC was awarded the contract with two bids submitted, both from outside the local area. There are no local cloud seeding vendors. This year's proposed program targets only drainages located in San Luis Obispo County which will augment runoff into Twitchell Reservoir. No seeding will be conducted this year in the Santa Ynez Watershed as it has not substantially recovered from the Zaca Fire. Meteorological monitoring services provided as part of the cloud seeding contract have proved to be invaluable during winter storm events. The program's full-time certified meteorologist (who has

access to sophisticated radar capability) is used to augment the Flood Control District's existing storm-monitoring capabilities.

Land lease agreements which are usually renewed as part of this Board action will be brought separately as they are now being handled directly by the General Services Department.

**Alignment with other River System interests and Safety concerns**

When it is apparent that Twitchell Reservoir will fill or flows on the Cuyama River and other tributaries that feed into Twitchell Reservoir approach significant volume seeding operations immediately cease in that watershed. The program includes operational constraints designed to preclude or limit seeding effects over flood sensitive areas. Only backcountry areas behind major reservoirs are targeted, no urban areas are seeded. As a standard practice, the Flood Control District retains final decision-making authority over all seeding operations for safety reasons. The Zaca Fire area needs another year or two before vegetation has recovered enough to utilize cloud seeding there to augment runoff into Gibraltar and Cachuma Lakes. The Gap Fire on the South Coast is far away from the target areas behind Twitchell Reservoir and does not pose an obstacle to conducting seeding activities in Northern Santa Barbara and Southern San Luis Obispo Counties. The California Department of Water Resources labels cloud seeding as a “safe and effective means of augmenting local water supplies”.

**Compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act**

On November 28, 2000, your Board approved 00-ND-29 pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines (CEQA). The Planning and Development Department reviewed the proposed 2008-09 program and made the finding that CEQA Guidelines Section 15164 is applicable thus no additional review is required.

**Background:**

The cloud seeding program uses state of the art methods accepted by California Department of Water Resources to augment rainfall in designated target areas by injection of silver iodide into the cloud mass, acting as artificial condensation nuclei to form more raindrops. Cloud seeding has long been recognized as a cost-effective supplemental water supply alternative and, for that reason, has been an ongoing program of the County Water Agency since 1982. Twitchell Reservoir has completed its release of water captured from the storms of the previous winter and is therefore empty and has 110,000 acre-feet of storage space available. Twitchell Reservoir performs a most important function of reclaiming storm runoff and releasing it after storm season and at a slower rate to recharge the Santa Maria Ground-water Basin.

**Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

Budgeted: Yes

**Fiscal Analysis:**

<u>Funding Sources</u>	<u>Current FY Cost:</u>	<u>Annualized On-going Cost:</u>	<u>Total One-Time Project Cost</u>
General Fund			
State			
Federal			
Water Agency	\$ 64,350.00		
Water District's share	\$ 64,350.00		
Total	\$ 128,700.00	\$ -	\$ -

**Narrative:**

The program cost continues to be 50/50 cost share between the Water Agency and local water districts with the Water Agency providing administration of the project. This agreement is considered equitable because the areas in the county located outside of water districts' service areas derive much of the benefits from the cloud seeding program share.

This program was included in the 2008-09 Adopted Budget under the Water Agency cost center of the Water Resources Division of the Public Works Department as identified on page D-336 in the budget book.

**Special Instructions:**

Direct the Clerk of the Board to send two originals of the Agreement with NAWC along with the minute order to the Water Agency office, Attn: Christina Lopez

**Attachments:**

CEQA Determination from Planning and Development  
 Agreement for Services of Independent Contractor w/NAWC (3 originals)

**Authored by:** Dennis Gibbs, Hydrologist, Sr., 739-8781